

## **Improve Cultural and Recreational Opportunities Throughout the State Tollgate #2**

### **1. Map of Causal Factors – Attached**

### **2. Assess the performance progress in this result area – Update (New information since Tollgate #1 only)**

No update at this time, however, Cultural and Recreational Results data from State Population Survey will be available to our group in July, which may result in additional insights into performance progress. We expect the data to be especially helpful in understanding demographic, ethnic, or geographic gaps in access to cultural and recreational resources.

### **3. Propose high-level purchase strategies for this result area. What are the key areas where the state should take action, and how (if known at this point)?**

The map of causal factors includes strategies that are necessary for successful provision of cultural and recreational opportunities to residents of Washington State. Our result team identified five high-level purchase strategies that should be emphasized in agency operations, budget development, and legislative efforts.

#### Making Strategic Choices to Meet Needs

Since state resources for acquiring and operating cultural and recreational resources are so limited, and since the state works with so many entities to provide cultural and recreational choices to Washington residents, the state must be strategic in its choices of what to buy, what to keep, and how to operate its resources. These choices need to be informed by a number of factors:

- A sense of what constitutes a resource of state significance
- Current and expected future population trends
- Interests and needs of Washington residents

We recommend that “making strategic choices to meet needs” be addressed in two ways. First, identify variation in access to cultural and recreational opportunities. In July, we will receive State Population Survey data on resident participation in various cultural and recreational opportunities. These data may show that certain demographic, ethnic, or geographic sectors do not participate as much as others in particular cultural and recreational opportunities. Our result team will meet in August to discuss the findings, what they mean for the various business lines included in our result area, and necessary programmatic or other changes designed to close significant access gaps.

The second way to address this strategy is to re-think the current mix of assets and responsibilities among cultural and recreational agencies. State Parks, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Department of Natural Resources operate various combinations of campsites, trails, boat launches, and off-road vehicle sites – a portfolio of offerings that should be reexamined from time to time. Details on specific realignment opportunities are provided in Section Four.

Partnerships – State government is by no means the only entity responsible for cultural and recreational opportunities. The federal government, local governments, the private sector (both profit and not-for-profit), higher education, and local school districts all play important roles. From both the financial and programmatic standpoints, partnering is essential in order to leverage limited financial resources. Intentional state-agency partnerships are described in further detail in Section Four.

### Marketing

The State Tourism Office is the primary state-government engine for influencing individual decisions to travel and recreate in Washington State. Through such mechanisms as market research, marketing plans, the [experiencewashington.com](http://experiencewashington.com) website, and strategic advertising, the Office partners with local communities and state agencies to link potential tourists to events and attractions in Washington State. More can be done to:

- 1) Ensure that specific state cultural and recreational resources and community events are featured through the website and other communication channels.
- 2) Coordinate state efforts and marketing mechanisms between state agencies, as well as with local events and groups, including convention and visitor bureaus, and other local and regional business organizations.
- 3) Maintain a balance in marketing to, and meeting the needs of, out-of-state (national and international) participants, and in-state participants.

### Stewardship

Stewardship relates to operating and maintaining cultural and recreational resources, in good condition, and on a sustainable basis. The quality of a visitor's experience of a given state resource is closely tied to its condition. For example:

- If a historic battlement site is dilapidated, it may be a safety hazard prohibiting close-up access, and an experiential understanding of the site may not be possible.
- If an outdoor sculpture in the state art collection is in disrepair, further damage is likely and viewers may be unable to appreciate the work fully.
- If noxious weeds are present on the landscape, the expectations of hikers, hunters, campers, or fishers for a natural-habitat setting may not be met.

Overall, the state needs to improve its ability to maintain cultural and recreational resources to the standards necessary to preserve them for future generations, as well as to meet citizen expectations for quality.

#### Proximity

Resources that are close-at-hand are most likely to be used. Access can be actual or, with the assistance of technology, virtual. “Virtual availability” of images and information about sites, facilities, artifacts, and wildlife, enhances actual participation in cultural and recreational opportunities.

In Tollgate #1 we discussed the need to make recreational resources available locally in order to encourage participation. The Growth Management Act’s planning processes provide certainty in land use, and local land use plans provide for access to recreational resources. These planning efforts, as well as state-funded grant programs, promote vital communities. While planning and acquisition of facilities continue, local government budget pressures have led to reduced hours and closure of many local facilities. Section Four provides more on local government facilities.

#### Conclusion

While the five items described above are designated as high-level purchase strategies, we assume that the state will continue to play a role in implementing the remaining strategies on the map of causal factors. In our estimation, while these additional strategies are necessary to deliver cultural and recreational opportunities to residents of Washington State, the emphasis for funding and implementation for the next few years should be on the five high-level strategies we’ve listed.

### **4. Guidance to agencies for budgets, analysis and legislation**

The following discussion of guidance to agencies represents the current thinking of our result team, and will be further refined over the next few weeks through consultation with the affected agencies.

#### **Partnerships**

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##### Description

A task force of state agencies should be developed by statute or executive order to research, design, and implement a plan for attracting and providing exemplary travel experiences to tourists as a result of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, B.C. Previous experience indicates that Washington can expect the greatest number of tourists during the two-year “shoulder” period following the Olympics.

The ice-age flood story, an extraordinary event in the state’s geological history, could serve as the focus of new cultural, historical, and interpretive programming created in support of this effort.

### Deliverables

The task force should include the State Tourism Office, State Parks, state historical societies, the State Arts Commission, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of Transportation. Prior to September 1, 2004, these agencies should develop cooperatively and submit to the Office of Financial Management:

- 1) A 2005 through 2012 timeline and milestones for major deliverables, such as market research, marketing plans, new or amended programs and activities, and new or renovated capital facilities;
- 2) One or more budget proposals to implement the first phase of activity;
- 3) Proposed legislation or regulatory changes, if any, or procedural and policy changes needed to ensure an effective partnership.

### Possible Barrier

While the value of partnerships can be substantial, partnerships can result in increased complexity and turnaround time for decision making and implementation. The state's Lewis and Clark Bicentennial planning experience showed that partnership did not reduce the number of requirements and considerations that needed to be satisfied, as each participating agency brought its share of red tape to the table. In order for more partnerships to be worth the effort, the price of cooperation needs to be reduced.

## **Recreation Management Pilot Project**

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### Description

As mentioned earlier, the state's three land-management agencies, State Parks, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), all manage lands for recreation. However, their focus and expertise differ. For example, DNR manages state trust lands, primarily timber lands, for revenue generation in support of trust beneficiaries, including common schools, state agencies, and higher education. Benefits from recreation are secondary and must not detract from the flow of revenues to beneficiaries. WDFW owns land primarily for species and habitat protection, conservation, and management; providing fish- and wildlife-associated recreational opportunities is also part of its mandate. On the other hand, State Parks has expertise in managing sites designed to serve large numbers of visitors. In recent years, all three agencies have struggled to manage their public recreation sites with dwindling General Fund support.

DNR and State Parks, with assistance from the Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation, should design and implement a plan to co-manage DNR recreation sites with high visitation rates, and that have high potential for revenue generation. WDFW should be included in the initial planning stages to determine whether similar co-management opportunities exist on its lands. Some DNR sites, such as Capital Forest and the Tahuya

State Forest, have sufficient area for developed camping, and high visitation rates, and may lend themselves to commercial recreational ventures.

In cooperation with the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), State Parks and the Department of Natural Resources should conduct a market research study, identify commercial recreation opportunities, design a pilot project, select a site, and implement a co-management model for two recreation seasons.

#### Deliverables

By September 1, 2004, IAC should, in consultation with the two proposed co-managers, develop:

- 1) A timeline, project outline, site-selection process with criteria, and budget request to implement the research and design phase of the pilot program.
- 2) Proposed legislation to harmonize DNR's recreational immunity protection with that provided to State Parks and Department of Fish and Wildlife (see discussion below).
- 3) A list of secondary locations where Parks, DNR, and possibly WDFW can cooperatively pool their staff to maintain sites in the same vicinity, regardless of ownership. This would increase the amount of time spent on maintenance and operations, while reducing the time spent on travel and other low-value tasks.

#### Legal Barrier

The Department of Natural Resource's recreational immunity protection does not apply when fees are charged. Unlike State Parks and Department of Fish and Wildlife, DNR is the only state-level recreation agency that does not charge fees to use its lands. If the recreational immunity statute were changed, then DNR could opt to participate in multi-agency parking pass programs for high-visitation DNR sites, or derive fee revenue for maintaining its recreation sites.

### **Consolidated Parking Pass for State Recreation Sites**

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#### Description

The State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Task Force, created by the Legislature in 2002, recommended creation of a single parking pass for sites operated by State Parks, Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Legislation to create such a pass was considered but not adopted during the 2003 legislative session. Parking passes provide convenience to recreational enthusiasts who visit a variety of sites during the course of a year. WDFW and State Parks currently charge a fee for parking, and have mechanisms for fee collection and enforcement. Most DNR sites are primitive camping sites located in remote areas of state trust lands. Currently, parking at these sites is free, and enforcement of a parking pass, as well as fee collection, do not appear to be cost-effective.

### Deliverables

By September 1, 2004, State Parks and the Department of Fish and Wildlife should develop a plan, budget proposals, and proposed legislation to create a joint parking pass that:

- 1) Increases customer convenience;
- 2) Does not diminish the net parking revenues for either agency;
- 3) Does not increase either agency's cost to issue parking permits or enforce payment; and
- 4) Distributes revenues according to a pre-determined formula.

### **Additional Opportunities to Reduce the Price or Improve the Efficiency of Current Services**

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Buying Across the Enterprise. The state land-management agencies engage in common tasks and make common purchases, but may be paying different amounts for frequently purchased items. DNR, State Parks, and WDFW should engage in a collaborative process to identify opportunities for savings during the 2005-07 Biennium through such methods as:

- 1) Delivering high-volume products/services at the lowest price. For example, if all three agencies buy picnic tables, volume purchasing, or purchasing from Correctional Industries, could lower the price.
- 2) Deploying volunteers at sister-agency facilities. For example, if State Parks wants to provide tours and interpretation at its historic sites, it could call on volunteers from the historical societies.

Information on these opportunities should be shared with OFM by September 1, 2004.

NonHighway and Off-Road Vehicle Account (NOVA). Statutory and administrative restrictions on the NOVA Account prevent its use for maintaining recreation sites within 30 minutes of a state highway or for recreation sites not focused on use by off-road vehicles (ORVs). IAC should re-examine these restrictions to determine if they are still valid, given the current locations and uses of ORVs.

State Parks Roads. Currently, State Parks has no agreed-upon source of capital funding for the preservation of roads located within State Parks. Between now and August 1, State Parks should work with OFM capital budget and transportation budget analysts, as well as members and staff of the Legislature, to determine whether road preservation is

most appropriately considered as part of the capital or as part of the transportation budget.

Product Identification. Recreation and culture agencies should identify and transmit to the State Tourism Office, information about key resources and service delivery systems that the Office could market to international, national, and regional tourists as an experience.

Local Government Facilities for Recreation. As mentioned in the “Proximity” discussion above, the state has an interest in the availability of local recreation facilities. We suspect that local government budget pressures have caused some jurisdictions to close or curtail the hours of their recreational facilities, but we do not have statewide data. To get a better picture of what is happening at the local level, OFM should work with IAC, the Washington State Association of Counties, and the Association of Washington Cities to quantify the number of locally operated recreational facilities and resources with closed or reduced hours, and identify any significant gaps in service that have resulted.

In addition, to follow up on the recommendation of the 2001 Local Parks and Recreation Task Force, IAC should dialogue with local parks officials to determine whether changes to the state’s statutes governing the creation of metropolitan park districts (MPDs) have resulted in the creation of additional MPDs, and whether this mechanism has been helpful for keeping local facilities open and maintained to standard.